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ABSTRACT

Texas, like the rest of the nation, is undergoing a shift toward an excess of females. Review of the changing balance of the sexes reveals that there were only 95.9 males per 100 females in 1970 with a projected drop to 91.8 by 1980. In 1950 Texas had an excess of 15,000 males, but by 1960 females outnumbered males by 90,000 and by 234,000 in 1970. Females outlive males (those born in 1974 can expect to outlive males by almost 8 years), and even though historically more males are born than females, the mortality rate for males is higher at every age level; therefore, the number of females begins to increase proportionately with each advancement of age. In Texas there are more males in rural than in urban areas (in 1970, 100.1 per 100 females), but that ratio is declining due partially to the influence of rural to urban migration. Texas has more males per 100 females among whites than among nonwhites, their sex ratios being 96.3 and 93.1 respectively in 1970. Generally, the balance between the sexes determines to an important extent future patterns of fertility, mortality, and migration. Specifically it influences the institution of marriage (older women may be marrying younger men), control of wealth (widowed females will inherit male controlled wealth), and politics (a larger female constituency may serve female interests). (JC)

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More Women Than Men

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Texas, like other states, is undergoing many changes, some more readily observable than others. One of the less publicized, yet very important, changes is the trend from male to female predominance in numbers.

This shift toward an excess of females has a variety of social and biological implications for the state as a whole. Men and women differ with respect to the amount of schooling, age at marriage, entrance into and length of labor force activity, types of occupations held, amount of income received and amount of social group activity. They also are purported to have different social, psychological and cultural characteristics. To a high degree, the tempo of life in any community is a function of the ratio of males to females in its population. Particularly now that the role of women in American society is in the process of redefinition, a review of the changing balance of the two sexes becomes a matter of special interest.

Trend Toward Females

A simple measure used to indicate the sex composition of a given population is the *sex ratio*, which is defined as the number of males per 100 females.

Texas has experienced a trend from male to female predominance in numbers since information was first collected and recorded separately for the two sexes, Figure 1. This trend occurred in two separate periods.

First, an overwhelming presence of men in the migration to a frontier Texas resulted in a striking disparity in the sex ratio in the early days — 115 males per 100 females in 1850. During the following two decades, the pattern gradually changed as more women and children were among the immigrants and as the Civil War took its toll on the male population. By 1880 the sex ratio had dropped to 107.

This was followed by increased immigration of men in the 1880's and the sex ratio went back up to 111 by 1890. Since that time, however, the number of females has been consistently growing at a faster rate than males.

The sex ratio became almost evenly balanced when it reached 100.4 in 1950. Ten years later, when the sex ratio became 98.1, there were more females than males for the first time in the state's history.

This pattern toward female predominance in numbers continued during the past decade. By 1970 there were only 95.9 males per 100 females and the sex ratio is projected to drop to 93.8 by 1980.

Texas had an excess of 15,000 males in 1950, but ten years later females outnumbered males by 90,000 and by 234,000 in 1970. Population projections indicate that by 1980, Texas females will outnumber the male population by a margin of 410,000.

Women Live Longer

The major reason for the increased numerical predominance of females is their lower mortality rates. Not only do women tend to live longer than men, but the difference in their life expectancies is steadily widening. Girls born in 1900 could expect to outlive their male cohorts by 3 years. For babies born in 1974, the girls can expect to outlive the boys by almost 8 years. For the United States as a whole, life expectancies at birth increased almost 24 years for females during the past 70-year period — from 51.1 in 1900 to 74.8 years in 1970 — while increasing only 19 years for males — from 48.2 years to 67.1 years.

Age Levels a Factor

While the changing balance between the sexes is an important trend in itself, it takes on added significance when applied to specific situations. For this reason, information is presented regarding the balance between the sexes at different age levels and also for residence and ethnic categories.

Historically in Texas, as well as the rest of the nation, there are more males born than females. For the 10-year period, 1960 to 1970, there were 104.7 male per 100 female births. Thus, life begins with an excess of boys. The mortality rate for males is higher at every age level; therefore, the number of females begins to increase proportionately with each advancement in age.

In 1970, there were 103.6 boys per 100 girls under 5 years of age. Boys still outnumbered girls slightly at age 19, but there were more females than males at age 20, and thereafter the margin by which females outnumbered males increased steadily at each succeeding age level. The sex ratio was 96.5

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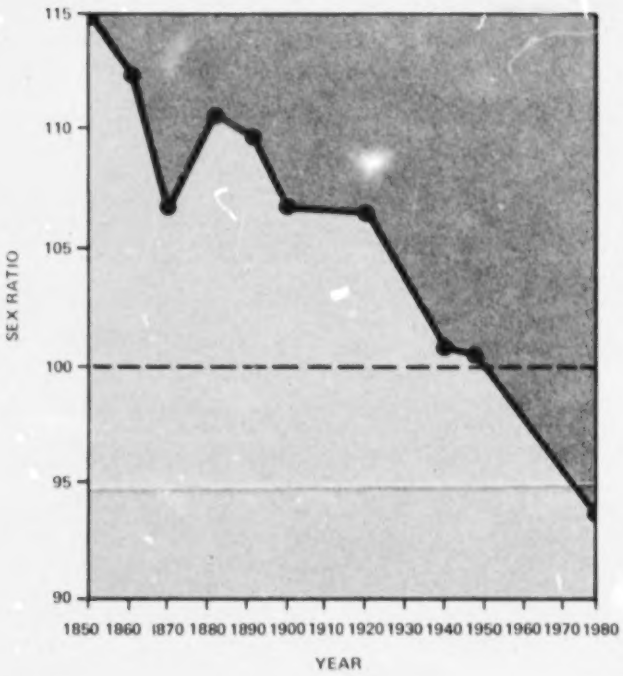

Fig. 1. Sex ratios for Texas, 1850-1970 and projected to 1980.

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between 25 and 34 years of age and fell to 47.6 males per 100 females in the Texas population between the ages of 95 and 99 in 1970.

The pattern of lower sex ratios with each advancement in age displayed in Figure 2 has a variety of consequences. Among the more striking of these is the imbalance in the voting ages and also of widows and widowers. In 1970, there were more than 303,000 more females than males of voting age in Texas, and this margin is expected to increase steadily in the future. Also, in 1970 there were only 97,000 widowers in Texas (about 2.5 percent of the male population over age 14); at the same time, there were almost 493,000 widows (about 12 percent of the female population over age 14).

More Men in Rural Areas

Information contained in Figure 3 indicates that the sex ratio is

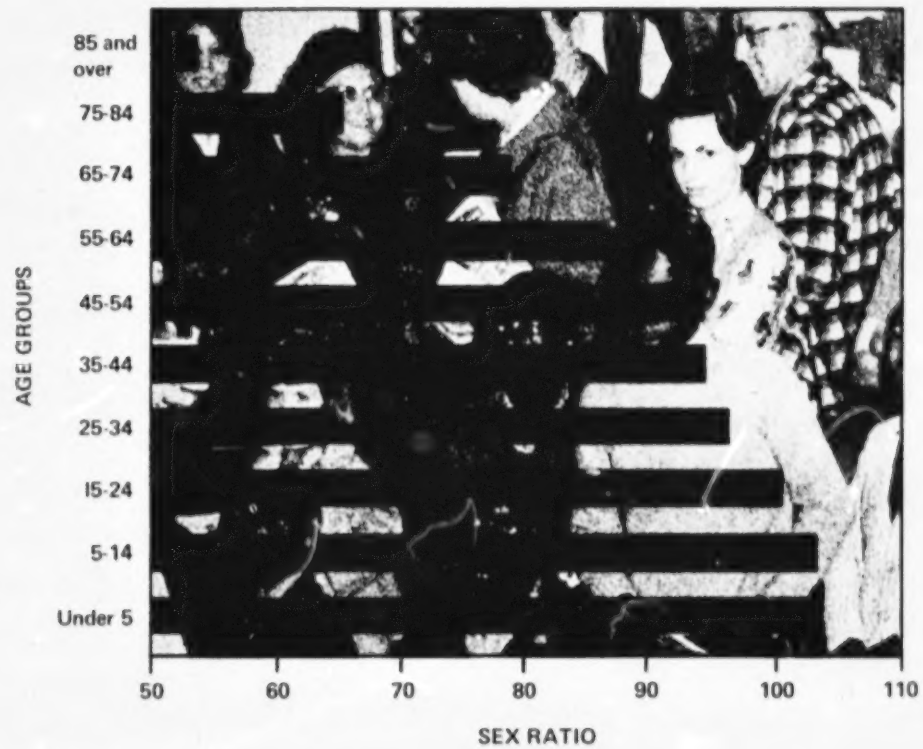

Fig. 2. Sex ratios for Texas, by age groups, 1970.

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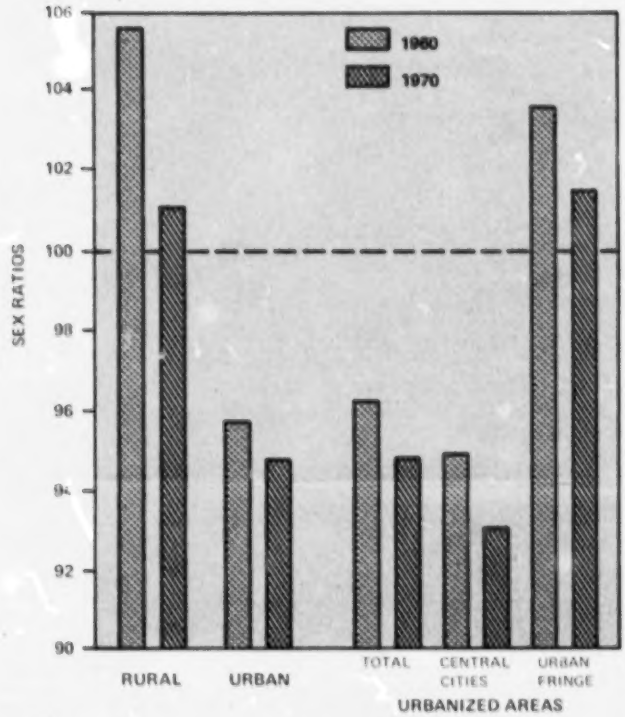

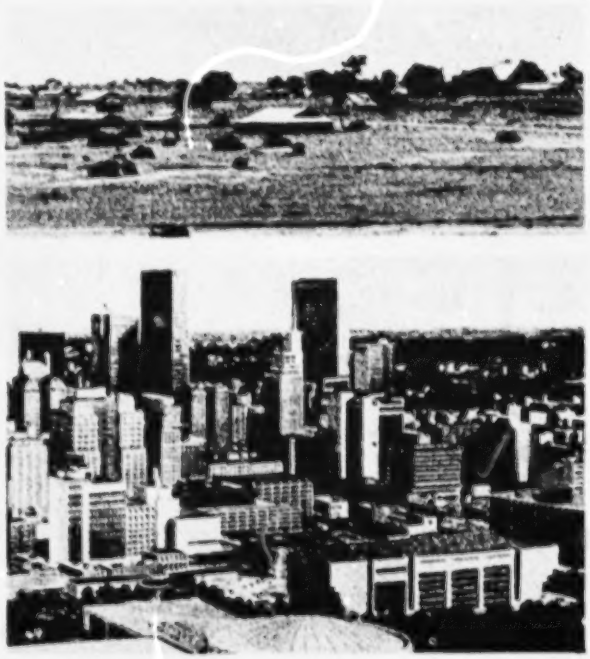

Fig. 3. Sex ratios for Texas, by residence, 1960 and 1970.

higher in Texas rural areas than in urban areas. In 1970 there were 100.1 males per 100 females in rural portions of the state, and 94.8 males per 100 females in urban areas. Within urbanized areas, the sex ratio is lower in the central cities than in the suburban fringes. Generally, the more urban the area, the fewer males to females.

The overall decline in the sex ratio for Texas has occurred in both rural and urban areas. However, the decline in the rural sex ratio, from 105.6 in 1960 to 100.1 in 1970 was somewhat larger than the decline observed for urban areas, from 95.8 to 94.8. This is at least partially a consequence of increased male migration from rural to urban areas during the past decade.

Race, Ethnic Trends Noted

The white population of Texas has more males per 100 females than nonwhites, their sex ratios being 96.3 and 93.1, respectively in 1970, Figure 4.

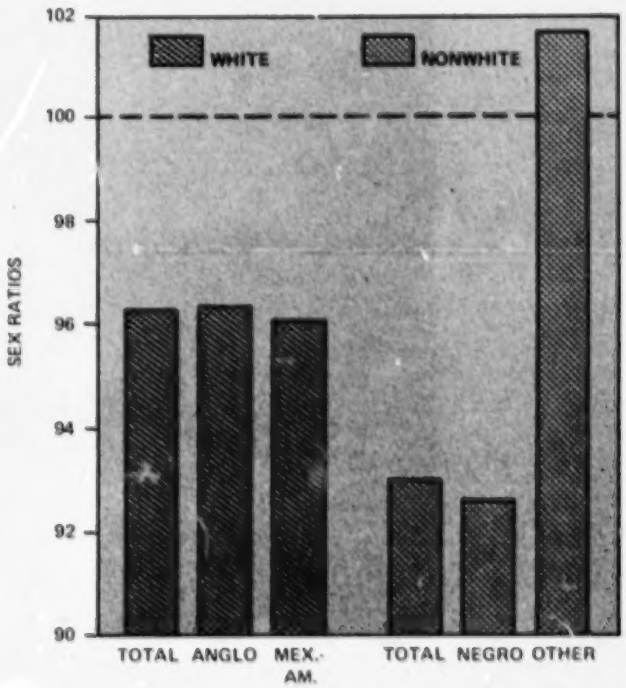

Fig. 4. Sex ratios for Texas, by ethnic groups, 1970.

Within the total white population, "Anglos" (all whites excluding Mexican-Americans) have 96.4 males per 100 females, while persons of Spanish language or Spanish surname have 96.1 males per 100 females. Within the total nonwhite population, Negroes have only 92.7 males per 100 females while all other nonwhites collectively have a sex ratio of 101.7. Individually among the other nonwhite groups, Indians have 100.4 males per 100 females; Chinese, 114.3; Filipinos, 100.8; and Japanese, 54.7.

The differences in sex ratios of various racial and ethnic groups are due to a combination of several circumstances — a slightly higher sex ratio at birth for whites as well as higher life expectancies, and different patterns of immigration into the United States and migration into and out of the state at different age levels. The unusually low number of Japanese males in relation to Japanese females largely reflects two situations. The first is the number of marriages of white male Texans with Japanese females, especially in the late 1940's and early 1950's. A second reason is the lack of job opportunities for Japanese males in Texas as compared with other sections of the nation, especially Western and Eastern United States.

What Changes Imply

It has been shown that Texas has experienced a trend from male predominance in numbers to an increasingly larger excess of females in the total population. Boys still outnumber girls at birth, but from the time of birth, mortality takes a heavier toll of the males. After the first 19 or 20 years of life, females outnumber males, and their advantage in numbers increases at each higher age level. In general, whites have more males per 100 females than nonwhites, and the more urban the area, the smaller the proportion of males to females.

Broadly perceived, the balance between the sexes determines to an important extent the future patterns of fertility, mortality and migration in a given society. It also has important implications for specific situations. For example, the lack of balance in the sex ratio at the most marriageable periods of life tends to either make marriage impossible for some, or causes a delay in marriage, or forces persons to go outside their regular group to find a mate. Furthermore, a large share of the state's wealth is controlled by women who have survived their male spouses; and the margin by which women outnumber men in the voting ages (18 and over) more than doubled during the past decade alone. In 1960, Texas had 146,000 more females than males of voting age, but by 1970 they outnumbered males of voting age by 304,000. As this trend continues, politicians likely will be increasingly receptive to the concerns voiced by women.

As the gap in life expectancies of males and females widens, the sex ratio becomes consistently lower in the older ages, with the number of widows increasing rapidly while the number of widowers is declining. For example, the number of widows increased by about 100,000 between 1960 and 1970 while the numbers of widowers declined by more than 2,000.

This leaves increasingly larger numbers of women to live alone. Loneliness in old age is a cost that has to be borne by many more women than men. Many widowed females prefer not to live in "rest homes" or group quarters occupied mostly by aged persons and also prefer not to reside in the homes of their children. As a result of publicity given to high crime rates, a large number of Texas widows prefer to live in higher cost housing arrangements which give them added protection. At the same time, they desire to live near others of about their same age level. This situation, then, creates a steadily expanding market for special types of housing planned especially for older women.

Patterns Will Change

As the difference in life expectancies between the two sexes increases and the number of widows outstrips widowers by an increasingly wider margin, the situation could become more balanced by younger men marrying older women. No modern society, including the United States, is so strongly tied to the traditional husband-older-than-wife practice that it cannot be changed. A trend in this direction has already occurred in some countries. In West Germany, where about 450,000 marriages take place each year, the traditional wife-younger-than-husband situation has been reversed in more than 70,000 cases. In Great Britain, the number of marriages in which the wife is older than the husband has increased tenfold in recent years. In Sweden it has increased twelvefold. Thus, the changing balance between the sexes could eventually result in the U.S. and Texas following the pattern set by some other nations.

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